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THE HONOURABLE
THE
COMMONS
OF
ENGLAND
ASSEMBLED IN
PARLIAMENT:
The humble Proposals of a VVell-wisher
to Englands Prosperity.

Humbly presented and submitted unto your most judicious considerations, wherein are demonstrated sundry ways to raise Money, both speedily, for the present necessities of the Kingdom, and certainly, for a lasting Annuall Revenue: Whereby the industrious People of this Nation may be eased, his Majesty truly and faithfully served, generall Taxes for the future lesned, Pole-Mony and Donatives spared; and the Government under his Majesty's most Royall Person (which God grant in mercy to this Nation may be for many years over us) splendidly and magnificently maintained and supported.

In order to which, by way of Introduction, History doth make it out, that it was held as a Maxim amongst the wisest Counsellors of State, and greatest Politicians, to be ever the safest, best, and most pleasing way to any civilized People, to raise the Revenue for the support of the Government, out of those which generally they found their People were most inclining or addicted unto: supposing on the one hand, that by Pecuniary mulcts men would be very much won from viciousness, merely to save their purses; So on the other hand, that when ties are laid on viciousnes, it seldom meets with opposition, but is easily admitting even the most lasting Revenue of any whatsoever: wherefore

that although they are at never so great a charge to please their fancies and appetites they will not restrain themselvs, counting it Gallantry to purchase their pleasures at dear rates, glorying in the profuseness of expence therein.

Therefore, how much better is it (seeing Vice is so hard to be exploded from Man-kind,) that out of it a Revenue, for the expence and support of the Government, should be raised, rather than out of the Industry of laborious and ingenious men.

And to satisfy all Persons concerned herein, that it is no new thing to have Money raised out of the vices of a Nation for the support of the Government, but that it is practised among very knowing and politick People : *Russia, Italy, and Spain*, will afford us fit examples, as at this day is practised amongst them.

First, In *Russia*, The Emperour of those large Territories receiveth his greatest Incom out of his *Cabacks*, which in our Language is either Tipling-Houses, Drinking-schools, or Ale-houses, either of which that word will bear.

Secondly, *Italy*, As *Rome, Naples*, and other parts, the Princes of which Territories do raise great Revenues from their licenced Stews; though I think it very unfit, that among us who profess the purity of the Gospel such wickedness should be countenanced or tolerated upon any such Accompt as to raise Mony in this Nation thereby.

Thirdly, *Spain*, whose great Monarch, for Tobacco vended in smoak and sneezing as also out of Play-houses, and other Recreations permitted in his Kingdom, receives yearly a very considerable Incomb.

So that you see the fore-mentioned Nations, through a discreet Policy have laid their greatest burdens upon Vice meerly to spare the virtuous.

Are we in *England* so free from Vice, that we cannot find whereon to lay the like Impositions, but that most of all Taxes generally must be laid upon the Industrious party ? Surely no, for although *England* is fuller of vertuous persons then any Kingdome in the World, yet it is conceived by Juditious men, there is so much vice nourished among us, that if what is practised, were loaden with pecuniary dutys, will raise a very considerable Reuenuue towards the expence of the Government, and thereby greatly ease and encourage Ingenuous and vertuous men. Which, that it may be had into consideration, and that the Ease, Pride, and Luxury of this Nation may bear the burden, to the sparing of the Industrious and laborious, I proceed to shew the waye and means concurring thereunto, whereby I hope, in the Close, it will appear, that meerly out of that which may be termed the viciousnes of the Nation, not only a considerable annual Rent may be raised, but a very large supply had for the present necessities which at this time so presses the Kingdome.

First, That no person throughout *England* and *Wales* be permitted to Retail Beer or Ale in any Chandlers or Cooks shop, Victualling-house, Tavern, or any other way whatsoever, without License : And that for such License, to pay a Fine, and yearly Rent, according to the draught they have and place where they are seated; and the better to prevent disorders, and to ascertain and secure their rent, none to be admitted to Licenses but able responsable men for estate, and of good lives and conversations.

The which houses may be reduced to a certain set number in each Town, City, Parish, according as the Magistrates of the said City, Town, or Parishes shall think convenient, and in case of Indiscreet knowing persons, there may be one h

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3 l. Fine one with the other, and as much yearly rent, amounts Rent.
1. unto three hundred thousand pounds present money, and the like
00000 yearly. For though in some places 20 s. may be enough, in 300000
others ten and 20 l. would be but little enough.

The Retaylers of drink being thus established, and the fore-mentioned Revenue raised upon them, then may the Excise which the Brewers now pay, and is so stumbled at, (because not any person that brews their own Beer, doth pay one farthing to the Excise) be totally laid aside, and likewise that design of raising Excise on Malsters, for those that make their own Malt, will have the like priviledg as when they brewed their own Beer: For as the Excise is now gathered, only the poor and such as have their drink from Brewers, and set out Ships, bear the whole burden thereof. And such as are able, and brew their own Drink; of which thousands of Families there be in *England* and *Wales* that do so, go scotfree.

But because it may be alledged; It is not equall that the Retaylers of Beer and Ale, should only be charged with a duty towards the support of the Government, seeing all in the Nation reap alike benefit, and ought to bear their proportion; before I end, you shall see every one, by one way or other, be they Rich, or be they Poor, will be brought in for a share, that it shall not lye altogether upon particular shoulders.

Secondly, That none be permitted without Licence to Retail Tobacco, which superfluous smoky Weed, is so viciously used in *England*, and *Wales*, that there is no one thing vended in this Nation, which can bear a greater Fine and yearly Revenue then it; especially if the excessive and exorbitant gains which the Retaylers obtain thereon, be in any reasonable measure considered; for that which the Ware-house-man, and Retailing Tobacconist buyes of the Merchant, reckoned *Virginia*, ordinary sort, at 5 d. and 6 d. per pound, he utters again for 18 d. and 2 s. per pound, and what they buy of that which they call, sweet scented *Virginia* of the Merchant for 10 d. and 12 d. per pound, they utter again at 3 s. and 4 s. per pound, nay, oftentimes they have as much for the ordinary sort, as for the sweet scented. And when the Retailing Tobacconists vend these sorts to Vintners, Ale-houses, and Chandlers, and who utter it by the Pipe, they sell it for six and 8 s. per pound; and for the better sort by the Pipe, obtain 12 s. and 16 s. per pound: which considered, is there any thing that merits more to have a duty raised thereon, than this Weed Tobacco? For if dear or cheap, none uses it the less, or will do so, that Calculating the multitude of Warehouse-men, & Tobacco-shops, retailing Tobacco, and then those that use it in Chandlers and Cooks shops,

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VICARAGES, ALE-HOUSES, and Taverns; it may be value^d *Annually* at twice as much as Retailers of Beer and Ale, the gains being excessive and exorbitant, and a useless Commodity: but if Calculated only after the rate of the Retailers of Beer and Ale, it will produce three hundred thousand pound present money, and as much yearly rent.

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Thirdly, That without Licence, no person whatsoever to Retail Wine in *London* or elsewhere, neither Coopers, Vintners, nor any that keep Cellars to furnish the Country, or private persons, there being many, especially within and about *London*, that may give a round sum for License to retail Wine, besides the Vintners, which, though in *London*, ought to pay for their Licenses, they selling their Wine retailed as dear, if not dearer, than they that do retail it in the Country, and pay for their Licenses; so that if all Retailers in and about *London*, as well as other Cities of *England* did pay for their Licenses, it would well amount all together, unto fourty thousand pounds Fine, and as much yearly Rent.

Fourthly, That without Licence, none should Retail Aquavite or Strong waters, of which there be many thousands in *England* within and without *London*, and other parts of the Kingdome, which added to these other sorts of forrain drinks, as *Sherbet*, *Tea Medea*, *Coffee*, and *Chicholata*, and other such like liquors, which being brought under one and the same form; the Revenue that would be raised thereby, may be computed to rise unto twenty thousand pounds present money for Fines, and as much yearly Rent.

Fifthly, It being already in this Kingdome established, that no Stage-Playes, Sights, Opera's, or such like Recreations, are to be used or set up without License, then those that set up such things, should be ingaged to pay good Fines for License, and a yearly Rent, which if computed at 2 s. in the pound, out of what they daily gather in, it may arise to thirty thousand pounds *per annum*, throughout the Kingdome, and they may very well give as much more present money for Fines.

Sixthly, In regard Vanity, Ease, and Pride sway so much with us in *England*, and is maintained to as great a height in our Nation, as in any part of the World, which will sufficiently appear, if observation be but taken of those numbers of Coaches daily set up and used almost by every one in this Kingdome, upon which Vanity, Pride, and Ease, there may very well be laid a burden towards the Nations Charges; and the rather, because such persons for the most part are exempted of paying any duty in reference to their expence of Beer and Ale in their Families, by brewing their own drink, and no way in a manner liable to Excise, or any duty, as those aye that have no drink, but from the Retailers thereof;

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fore to be helpful in their station to bear a part of the Nations Charge, there can be no way so convenient to raise a duty from such, but to Enact it, That no person shall keep a Coach in England or Wales without License, for which to pay five pound Fine, and five pound Annual Rent for a Coach of two Horses, and of four, 7 l. 10 s. and of six, ten pounds; and so *pro Rato* for one two, or more Coaches that they may keep, of two, four, or six Horses, be they Nobility, Gentry, Citizens, Stage, or Hackney-Coaches, it being supposed, that throughout England and Wales, there may be used twenty thousand Coaches when least; which at five pounds Fine, and five pounds Annual Rent, will amount unto one hundred thousand pounds ready money, and as much Annually. And what person is he that for his Ease, Vanity, or Pride, will refrain the keeping of a Coach for 5 l. License Money, and as much yearly, for, and towards the expence of the Government, being, if considered, it will be saved to him otherwayes in Taxes, which generally come to much more.

So that it will appear, by the six foregoing proposals, there may 1. easily be raised for the present necessities of the Kingdome, seven 790000 hundred and ninety thousand pounds ready money, and as much 79000 Annual Rent, which will go very far towards the expenses of the Government, and the taking away of Taxes, which can never be levi'd to raise mony so equally and conveniently, or so much to the ease and content of the People, as by such wayes as these; which if drawn into a right Channel, and the collecting of this money which will yearly be paid in upon Licensed Ale-houses, and Retaylors of Tobacco, besetled upon the present Receivers throughout England and Wales, it will be done at a very easy Charge: And then the Auditors keeping the Accompts, as they do of his Majesties other Rents in each County, will be a means that no Arrears be suffered, or uncollected, to the great satisfaction of those Towns and Parishes in each County that are to pay the same.

In a Book called, *Trade Revived*, published about a year since, as will appear, in fol. 49. of that book, and so forwards, the proposal of raising money by Licenses upon Beer and Ale, Tobacco, and other Liquors, was set forth; and besides these, other fore-mentioned Proposals of raising money upon Coaches, and Pastimes, in this Paper inserted, there be sundry other wayes propounded for the like use, as well for a present supply, as an Annual Rent; which if taken into consideration with the rest, happily may be of good use and furnish means to do what ever work is to be done in this Kingdome, without trouble or vexation to the people, but rather to their quiet and advantage. And because it is the gene-

Trade Revived lying by them, not to look back, or to take the pains to turn over Papers (if mislaid) thereby to inform themselves of what may be necessary for the good of the Nation to promote the same when opportunities offer. I conceive it may be acceptable enough, briefly in reference to this our purpose, once more to bring in view, what was therein set down touching these things, which are as followeth.

First, To have publick Registers throughout *England* in all Towns, Cities, and Ports, as well to Register Lands as Shipping, who upon their admission, to pay a Fine and yearly Rent.

Secondly, All such as Register their Estates in Lands and Shipping, whereby a certain and assured benefit will accrue, not only to themselves and Posterity, but to the whole Nation at their Registering their said Lands and Shipping, to pay 3 d. 4 d. or 6 d. in the pound, according to their Annual Rent, towards the present necessities of the Kingdome, and 3 d. 4 d. or 6 d. per Tun, of Shipping.

Thirdly, That publick Notaries may be established throughout *England* and *Wales*, at whose admission, to pay a Fine and yearly Rent.

Fourthly, That publick Brokers may be established for the use of the Commerce, and none else admitted to use that Calling, and at their admission to pay a Fine and yearly Rent.

The use of which four-recited particulars, (both as to the advantage of the Nation in general, & every particular person) is at large in the said Sheets of *Trade Revived*, and fol. 49. before mentioned, set forth, being purposely for brevity sake here omitted. And when the benefit and advantage which the Nation will receive by the aforesaid settlement is taken into consideration, as also calculation made of the present advance of money thereby, and future Rent that will come in therefrom, surely it will apparently be cleared to all, that a most plentiful increase will be had thereof, both present and to come, much to ease the people from Taxes, which let them be never so small, are both burdensome, and ill reseenged; all which together, may arise unto as much as the six first Proposals.

And to accompany the fore-recited means to raise a Revenue for the support of this Nations Government, the duty of Customs upon all imported Manufactory, and superfluous Commodities. And Excise upon our own Manufactory consumed among our selves, is the most innocentest and equallest way that can by mankind be thought of in a Nation, and as good a way to bring in a constant and certain Revenue as any whatsoever, if regulated and fitly ordered and collected, without burthening the people

ding to their expences, so that therin none need to envy one the other, for all pay proportion, as they be in quality, which duties are not burthenesome in themselves: would be so accounted, were they not made so by the irregular way in their collect of which, concerning the due regulation of the duty of Excise. By the Author a forementioned Book of *Trade Revived*, in fol. 25. and so forwards; it is at large declared some things whereof, since his Majesty's most happy restoration, have bin both red, and regulated, by which the Commerce at this day doth find, not onely ease, benefit, to their great encouragement and hope, that in due time, all things else are amiss therein, will receive the same Issue and amendment.

Having ingaged your Honours patiences thus far to read and observe what is express'd in the foregoing Proposals, I was minded here to rest, and to spare my thoughts, till I saw what effect those things would take already inserted in this Paper. But fearing I might not have the like opportunity, and also knowing the necessity the Nation for Want of Money to be very great; as likewise that perchance soon the particulars mentioned may be stumbled at, because either not rightly understood or that they may happily draw a duty from som that are unwilling to bear any charge the publick themselves, so it can be imposed any ways upon others, or that it may bring the Nation into a quieter condition for the future, and lessen their present fees, divers persons are so hard to part with, that rather then lose a penny of their present com, will be content to suffer their own Posterity and the Nation eternally to lye in oppressive misery, wherby in time no man will dare or be able securely to deal one with the other, and if they do, certainly & assuredly couzned. In consideration of which forasmuch that some things which are proposed, not being settled rightly, may not answer expectation. To supply the deficiency whereof, and compleat what this may fall short, I shall lay down one way more to raise money for the Publick which is, That Sealed Paper may be Introduced and used in this Nation, as it is in the Kingdome of Spain: And if so settled here in England, it will bring in so considerable a Revenue for the support of the Government, and of his Majesties most Royal Favour, that after it hath once taken place, it will issue from every person so easily and inexpensively, that no rational man can any way repine thereat, for that none of the poor will be burthened therewith, arising chiefly from such as are able, and will be willing to pay the same without grudgings: And so certain will this Revenue be, as it can be more, issuing from so many small springs, that constantly running through several Channels into one, will increase the same into so fair a stream, that it will be the greatest burden of the Nations expence, and so become the only means to set off from all other future Taxes.

I would not be mistaken in this proposal of raising money, by introducing Sealed Paper, that here I mean, that all Paper used in England should be monopolized, and sealed from one hand, no, no.

But that a certain sort of Paper be sealed, and used in all publick occasions that may appear in Judicature, and at several prizes, according to the occasions, a sume Moneths since presented to his Majesty, the particulars whereof being subject to your honourable Considerations, are as followeth.

That there be an Office erected for the Sealing of Paper and Parchment for publick use, a stock thereof will be prepared for a very small sum of Money to begin the

That this Paper so Sealed, may be of one sort for proportion, that so the Records in places, may answer their duplicates, when transcribed and transmitted unto the Office, which said Paper according to the several uses for which it is to be applied, to be of distinct prizes, which is to be expressed by the Seal; the Parchment to be used according to its uses, in small or greater Panes, labells, or pieces.

That only the first sheet or page of every Evidence or writing which shall consist of more sheets or pages then one single sheet or page, to receive only the Seal, and any of the rest following the first sheet or page, but to be of common Paper unsealed.

That these Seal, being of several Prizes; the first Seal, to be valued at a penny a sheet or page, and this to be used for all manner of Receipts, Acquittances, Entries at the Custome-house, Discharges, Petitions, Affidavits, Certificates, and other the ordinary occasions.

The second Seal to be of 3 d. a sheet or page, and this to be implied for all Agreements, Sales of goods, Bonds, Bills, to fifty pounds, and under.

The third Seal to be at 6 d. the sheet or page for all Bonds and Bills, and above 50 l. 00 l.

The fourth Seal at 12 d. the sheet or page, for all things, as before, above 100 l. but exceeding 500 l.

The fifth Seal at 2 s. the sheet or page, for all things from 500 l. to a 1000 l. and under. This Seal may be comprehended all Declarations, Bills, and Answers in Chancery, or Courts, Judgments, Pleas, Executions, and Decrees, which concern Suits in or Chancery.

The sixth Seal at 4 s. a sheet or page for any sum above 1000 l. for all Leases, Purchases, Mortgages, Rent-charges, Conveyances of Land, Houses, or Offices, Wills and Testaments, and such like.

The seventh Seal at 20 s. a sheet or page, comprehending all matters that pass under the Great Seal, or Privy Seal.

The eighth Seal at 40 s. comprehending all Honours under the degree of a Baron.

The ninth Seal 4 l. for a Baron, and all other Superior Honour.

The tenth Seal at 10 l. a sheet or page, comprehending, and having reference unto Government, Domestick or Foreign, whether of Provinces, Cities, Towns, or Castles, and any other such like commands, to which is annexed an annual stipend.

As to the difference of these Seals, they may be fewer or more at less or bigger as it shall be thought convenient for each purpose, to which they may or shall be used. And as touching the management and setting this design, that it may do the best service for which it is proposed and intended, if it be approved, and that your Majesties shall desire to be further informed therein, the Author of this Proposal will readily obey command, and questions not but to make it evident that no one can more easilier be established, and produce an Incomparable more pleasing and convenient service to the Nation then this will, for none shall be compelled to use this Paper,

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er, unles they of their own accord will, there being not any person that shall use it, but will one way or other find an advantage thereby: And for the publick advantage that will arise in reference to the Incomb thereof, let consideration be had of the effect it produceth in *Spain*, where for this many years it hath bin used, and is found the most readiest, greatest, and insensible Incomb of any, and hath brought into the *Spanish* Coffers, vaste sums yearly, to many scores of thousands of Duckats, although they are for people few in number, and very mean in negotiations; and it was in the time of Spains greatest extremity and want, amidst their late wars with *France* and *Holland*, first set afoot; which very thing, and the Revenue *Spain* received thereby, had it bin paid in Silver, as it was in black money, it would well nigh have supplyed the best of his expences for those *French* Expeditions; but as it and all other the King of Spains Revenues of his Crown are gathered in, in Cope-money, the loss thereby is so great, that it lessens his whole Incomb one half, and hath ruined *Spain*, so as never to be recovered without a Miracle: and should we ever here in *England* suffer Coper Coyn, or debased money to pass for currant amongst us, we shall soon make *England* worse then *Spain*. Considering then of what a value this settlement was to *Spain*, a poor depopulated Kingdome, how much more considerate will it be to *England*, whose large Commerce and dealings, both abroad and at home, carried to a greater heighth through the infinite multitudes of people, all whose transactions will be as so many riverets adding still to the filling of the Cistern, that it cannot but in reason be granted to be a settlement worthy the taking into consideration, for hereby such Publick-Faith Debts, or other Debts which shall be thought fit to be paid, to such as have suffered so much for their loyalty to their King and Countrey, may receive a quick and easy satisfaction, of which there are sundry Poor of all sides, that merit relief therein.

I have now done, and I hope none will think their labour ill spent in the observing or reading what in this paper is set forth, or blame the Author for publishing the same, such things as these being only fit for National meetings, and by them to be considered, the which blessed be God, we now enjoy with all freedome, so it is my hope, and I cannot but believe, that whatsoever may any wayes advance the Publick good, will be with much earnestness (now in this present Parliament) preferred and perfected to the glory of God, his Majesties Honour, and the Nations ease and Prosperity, which I heartily wish, and when any of the particulars herein mentioned, hath bin, or is by any other person made publick, it will very much rejoice me to find, and know that there be assenters to these my thoughts and Judgment, and that have like publick spirits as to wish well to their native Countrey and brethren inhabitants therein, and who also desire to do good, for good sake; for undoubtedly would every man leav off self interest in its exorbitancy, & strive to promote the comon good, staying a while & striving the advancement of the one, it would make them in due time attain unto the other, when as its most probable by striving only for self, both the one and the other come to ruine; I wish it were not so much the present fin of the Nation, its not to late to be amended, and I hope it will be mended before it grow too late, which once hapning, there will be no going back. Concluding therefore with this Prayer, That if by presuming to publish and present these to your Honours, I have erred, let the zeal I have for the peace and prosperity of *England*, and the desire to promote his Majesties service, obtain a pardon for him, who begs of God, that he will give you Wisdome and Courage to settle this.

this poor Nation, "that hath so long lain under misery, in unity and peace, both in Church and State, and also so to strengthen his Majesties hands with power, and his Coffers with Money, that he may be able to withstand and subdue all his Enemies, and reward his friends, that under him and his Government, the people of England may live a safe peaceable and happy life.

John Alcock F.R.S. M.D. 1702

John

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